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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 008899

SIPDIS

NOFORN

GENEVA FOR JEFF DELAURENTIS  
DRL FOR DANIKA WALTERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/2014  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: DRUG TIES RELATED TO GUAITARILLA POLICE DEATHS

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs Milton K. Drucker, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

11. (C) On August 30, the Inspector General's Office (Procuraduria) announced that it had closed the disciplinary investigation into the March 19 Army-Police clash in Guaitarilla, Narino Department. According to the televised announcement, the Procuraduria will press charges for alleged negligence and official misconduct against the Director of Operations in the Police "GAULA" Unit (a special anti-kidnapping and anti-extortion unit) and four other officials. In an unrelated incident on August 31, Police and Army units shot at each other again, this time in the outskirts of Bucaramanga, Santander Department, killing two police officers. It is not yet clear what caused the latest incident. End Summary.

Guaitarilla Background

12. (C) During an official disciplinary investigation of the March 19 Army-Police clash near Guaitarilla, Narino Department, the Procuraduria uncovered evidence and received testimonies showing that the seven police and four civilians killed were involved in a cocaine deal gone awry. They have not yet made a decision about Army participation. Initially, Police Commander Libio German Castillo, who was in charge of the unit, said the police and civilian victims had been involved in an operation against a gang of criminals when they were killed. One source speculated that the Army was called in to attack Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) elements in the area and ended up in a friendly-fire incident with the police instead.

IG Files Charges Against Police Officials

13. (SBU) The Procuraduria is filing misconduct charges against police officials involved in the incident and is still investigating the army's involvement. Their charges against the police are for dereliction of duty and abuse of authority. The following officials have been formally charged: Ltc. Humberto Guaitbonza Carreno, Deputy Director of the National GUALA Unit, Ltc. Jorge Enrique Baron Blanco, Operating Commander of the Narino Police, Captain John Jamie Yepes Mejia, Commander of the Narino GAULA, Captain Libio German Castillo Villarreal, Commander of the Narino SIJIN (local police investigative unit), Superintendent Javier Alberto Alfaro Otero, Carlos Americo Chavez Loaiza, and Eduardo Rodrigo Huertas, Julio Cesar Hernandez Moreno, Arley Antonio Garcia Sicaronni, and Wilson Salet Bernal Villada of the National Police's Pasto detachment. The Prosecutor General's Office ("Fiscalia") will continue its separate criminal investigation.

14. (C) On August 25, Deputy Inspector General Carlos Arturo Gomez met with Emboffs to discuss Guaitarilla, Cajamarca, and other high-profile disciplinary investigations. Gomez noted that the Guaitarilla case probably involved mass corruption and individuals hiding or tampering with evidence. He added that autopsies of those involved that night indicated they had been abused, contradicting official accounts. He stressed that, despite overwhelming evidence of drug

involvement and official misconduct, those involved would receive little more than a slap on the wrist. For example, the Procuraduria could only issue disciplinary suspensions, and the Fiscalia had mentioned to Gomez that criminal convictions could be difficult given the problems with the evidence. Gomez told Emboffs that although a Fiscalia official had been present during all evidence collection, most evidence was still tainted before analysis, suggesting that Fiscalia employees were complicit in the cover-up.

Second Police-Army Gunfight

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15. (S) On August 31, a second Police-Army incident occurred when an Army GAULA unit opened fire on SIJIN officers in the rural outskirts of Bucaramanga, Santander Department, killing two police officers. While the SIJIN agents were allegedly wearing vests with bright yellow "SIJIN" letters on the front and back, the initial GAULA report to Army headquarters claimed the SIJIN agents fired first.

Comment

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16. (C) Those involved in the Guaitarilla incident, whether Army or Police, have refused to take polygraphs or discuss the incident publicly despite the MOD's public announcement that he wanted them to submit to polygraph exams. Ongoing revelations about the case have the potential to undermine the Minister of Defense's credibility and damage the military's public image. The latest incident near Bucaramanga will only aggravate already tense relations between the Army and Police. End comment.

DRUCKER

=====CABLE ENDS=====